

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

I. INTRODUCTION

This document was developed to provide a helpful set of guidelines for the use of social media by Maryland student-athletes. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr, Foursquare and blogs of all types.

The rapid growth of social media technologies combined with their ease of use and pervasiveness make them attractive channels of communication. However, these tools also hold the possibility of a host of unintended consequences. Applications that allow you to interact with others online require careful consideration to assess the implications of “friending,” “linking,” “following,” “geolocating” or accepting such a request from another person.

These guidelines are designed to help you understand your unique responsibilities as a Maryland student-athlete, identify and avoid potential issues, and protect your reputation and privacy as you utilize social media technologies.

II. GUIDELINES

Represent the University of Maryland with Honor

As a Maryland student-athlete, you are responsible for your social media activities and are expected to follow the same behavioral standards on-line as you are in your everyday life. The same laws, rules and guidelines for interacting with family, friends, teammates, coaches, faculty, staff, and fans apply on-line as in the real world. Activities that would violate the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct off-line are also considered violations on-line. Never compromise your personal reputation and integrity – or that of your team and university – through your use of social media technologies.

Do No Harm

Let your Internet social networking do no harm to yourself, family, friends, teammates, coaches, faculty, staff, Maryland Athletics or the University of Maryland.

Think Before You Post

There’s no such thing as a “private” social media site. Search engines can turn up posts and pictures years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it’s wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed. Post only thoughts and pictures that you would be comfortable sharing with the general public. Use good ethical judgment and always err on the side of caution.

Does It Pass the Publicity Test

If the content of your message would not be acceptable for face-to-face conversation, over the telephone or in another medium, it will not be acceptable for a social networking site. Ask yourself, would I want to see this message or image as the result of a Google search tomorrow or ten years from now? Would I want my mother or my grandmother to see it?

Remember, too, that comments made via social media can be and have been used by members of the media as attributed quotes.

Be Respectful

Remember that with rights, comes responsibilities. While you may have the right to freely express certain ideas or beliefs, you should weigh the values of civility and mutual respect when deciding to engage in certain forms of expression on-line. Stop, before you post, to consider the hurt that may result from the use of slurs or epithets intended to discredit, for example, another's age, ethnicity, gender, handicap, national origin, political beliefs race, religion or sexual orientation. Your on-line expressions also reflect on your team and your university.

Be Authentic & Transparent

Be honest about your identity. In personal posts, you may identify yourself as a Maryland student and student-athlete. However, always be clear that you are sharing your personal views and are not speaking as a representative of your team, Maryland Athletics or the University of Maryland. If you identify yourself as Maryland student-athlete, ensure your profile and related content are consistent with the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct and how you wish to present yourself to your family, friends, teammates, coaches, faculty, staff and fans.

Protect Your Identity

While you should be honest about yourself, don't provide personal information that could be used by scam artists, identity thieves, stalkers or others who may wish to do you harm. The same is true for the information of your family, friends, teammates and coaches. Don't list your home or campus address or phone number. Don't list your date of birth. It is a good idea to create a separate email address that is used only with social media sites.

Maintain Privacy

Do not discuss a situation involving named or pictured individuals on a social media site without their permission. Do not publish the personal information of others without their explicit permission. Do not collect sensitive information, such as phone numbers, ID numbers, social security numbers, payment information, etc., via social media, as those are not secure channels. As a guideline, do not post anything that you would not present in any public forum.

Understand Your Personal Responsibility

You are personally responsible for what you post on your own site and on the sites of others. Individuals have been held liable for commentary deemed to be copyright infringement, defamatory, proprietary, libelous or obscene. Be sure that what you post today will not come back to haunt you.

Abide by NCAA Rules

Ensure that you do not violate NCAA rules in your use of social media. For example, it is impermissible for student-athletes to promote or endorse any product whether on-line or off-line. It is also not permissible for current student-athletes to contact prospective student-athletes (recruits) in any manner, including via social media. Student-athletes must also be cautious in their social media interactions with athletic boosters.

Always “ask before you act” and speak with the Maryland Athletics Office of Compliance (301-314-1349; 2601 Comcast Center) if you have any questions regarding NCAA rules.

Correct Mistakes

Ensure that you have all the facts before you post. If you do make a mistake, correct it quickly and visibly. If you’re posting to a blog, you may choose to modify an earlier post – just make it clear that you have done so.

Monitor Comments

Most people who maintain social media sites welcome comments as a way to engage their audience and built community. However, you may be able to set your site so that you can review and approve comments before they appear. This allows you to respond in a timely way to comments. It also allows you to delete spam comments and to block any individuals who repeatedly post offensive or frivolous comments.

Don’t Use Maryland Logos

Do not use University of Maryland or Maryland Athletics wordmarks, logos or images without permission. Complete University of Maryland logo and trademark guidelines can be found at: <http://www.trademarks.umd.edu>

Respect for Academic Support & Career Development Unit (ASCDU) Time and Resources

Use of social media is strictly prohibited on ASCDU computers and during time spent in study table, with ASCDU counselors and with tutors. ASCDU computers and time spent in ASCDU is exclusively for your academic work. You should participate in personal social media conversations on your own time outside of ASCDU. Any exceptions must be specifically approved by the ASCDU staff member(s) on duty.

III. REMEDIAL ACTIONS

Violations of the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct through the use of social media are subject to remedial actions, up to and including the loss of scholarship and playing privileges and dismissal from the team.

Individual teams and head coaches may implement additional guidelines regarding the use of social media by their student-athletes. For example, a head coach may prohibit the use of social media technologies immediately prior to, during and following competition. Student-athletes are responsible for knowing and abiding by any such additional guidelines implemented by their respective teams. Violations of team guidelines regarding social media may subject student-athletes to additional, progressive remedial actions as determined by their respective head coach.

IV. SAFETY & PRIVACY TIPS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

The internet is open to a world-wide audience. When using social media technologies, ask yourself:

1. Did I set my privacy settings to help control who can look at my profile, personal information and photos? You can limit access somewhat, but not completely, and you have no control over what someone else may share.
2. How much information do I want strangers to know about me? If I give them my cell phone number, date of birth, address, email, class schedule or a list of possessions, how might they use it? With whom will my information be shared? Not everyone will respect your personal or physical space.
3. Is the image I'm projecting by my communications and photos the one I want my parents, friends, teammates, coaches, faculty/staff and fans to know me by? What does my profile say to potential graduate school interviewers? Potential employers? Which doors am I opening and which am I closing?
4. What if I want to remove information from my posts? Have I read the social networking site's privacy and caching statements? Removing materials from network caches can be difficult. Posted material can remain accessible on the internet until you complete the prescribed process for removing information from the caching technology of one or multiple (potentially unknown) search engines.
5. Have I asked permission to post someone else's image or information? Could I be hurting someone? Am I infringing on their privacy? Could I be subject to libel suits or other legal actions?
6. Does my equipment have spyware and virus protection installed and up to date? Some sites collect profile information to spam you. Others contain links that can infect your equipment with viruses that potentially can destroy data and infect others with whom you communicate. Remember to back up critical files on an external source in case of destructive attacks.